

THE HITLER MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

by

MILDRED S. WERTHEIMER

with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

Much of the material for this report was gathered by the author in numerous conversations with German leaders during September and October 1930.

INTRODUCTION

THE trend toward extremism in Germany which was signalized by the general elections of September 14, 1930 has still continued. In the September elections it had been expected that the extremists of the Right and the Left would gain considerably in view of the large number of unemployed in the Reich and the unfavorable economic conditions. But that Hitler's National Socialists could poll almost six and a half million votes and elect 107 Reichstag members astounded even the Hitlerites themselves. In more recent municipal elections in Germany the shift toward the Right has been still more marked, especially in Bremen where in the polling on November 30 the National Socialists rolled up a vote almost two and a half times as great as they had secured in September.^{1a}

Since the general election the minority government of Chancellor Heinrich Brüning has remained in office. It has formulated

and put into effect a financial program which provides for drastic economies and reforms in administration and expenditure calculated to balance the budget and pay off the Reich's accumulated deficits within three years. Conversations with leaders of all the German parties except the Communists and National Socialists had convinced Dr. Brüning that the Reichstag would never accept his finance program intact. It was therefore put through by executive decree under the emergency provisions of Article 48 of the Constitution, which provides:

"... If public safety and order be seriously disturbed or threatened within the German Reich, the President of the Reich may take the necessary measures to restore public safety and order. . . . The President of the Reich must immediately communicate to the Reichstag all measures taken by virtue of . . . this Article."

When the Reichstag reconvened on December 3 it was thus faced with a *fait accompli*. The threat of extremism, while it had not been strong enough to force the moderate parties to take the direct responsibility for voting the government's program, nevertheless frightened them sufficiently to prevent them from voting to rescind the decrees.

1a. In a district election in Koeslin, Pomerania, on December 7, the National Socialists polled 4,249 votes, however, as against 4,681 in the September balloting. Liberal German papers reported this a setback for the Hitlerites, especially since Pomerania is regarded as a stronghold of reaction. Cf. *New York Times*, January 11, 1931.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Since the September elections the press has been full of Hitler and his National Socialists. News of riots and disturbances caused by the Hitlerites has been frequent. What is the origin of the National Socialist party? Who is Hitler and what is his background? What is the program of the party? Who supports it? Why and how has it been able to achieve such success at the polls? This report attempts to answer these questions.

It will be recalled that the first years after the war were marked in Germany by the blackest disillusionment and discouragement. The German people, expecting a peace settlement based on Wilson's Fourteen Points, were thunderstruck by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, which imposed huge reparation demands, losses of German territory, occupation of the Rhineland and disarmament of the Reich. Added to the suffering of the war years there were further hardships caused by the blockade after the war, together with the dislocation entailed by the demobilization of the German army. All this was followed by the inflation, and by the occupation of the Ruhr. Ex-officers and soldiers without food or work, and members of the Right parties who were starving, blamed the Social Democrats, who had put through the Revolution and established the Republic and who had accepted the Versailles Treaty. They blamed also all those who stood for a foreign policy of fulfillment intended to lead slowly to better relations with the Allied powers, and to subsequent revision of the peace settlement. In such times, it was all too easy to win support for an extreme nationalist movement of protest. This was particularly true in Bavaria, which, after the murder of Kurt Eisner in Munich in February, 1919, and the relatively short government headed by the Social Democratic party, had been transformed into the headquarters of monarchist and militarist reaction. This brief revolutionary episode burned itself into the memory of the bourgeoisie. Anti-Semitism has been particularly strong in Bavaria ever since, for the conservatives blame all their troubles on

the fact that Eisner and other revolutionaries were Jews.

HITLER JOINS THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS

It was in such troublesome times that the National Socialist party had its obscure birth. The party grew out of a group of six men who met together during 1919 in a small back room in a café in Munich. Adolf Hitler joined this group after meeting Gottfried Feder, an engineer who is now the chief economist of the party. Almost immediately, Hitler appears to have become its leading personality. In the autumn of 1919 these men arranged two political meetings, the first of which was attended by 111 persons, the second by 130. More important, however, was the fact that at these meetings Hitler discovered his great talent as a speaker and his ability to hold and move his audiences. In his memoirs, Hitler says: "I could speak! After thirty minutes the people in the tiny room were electrified and the enthusiasm expressed itself in the fact that my appeal to those present to sacrifice something for the cause, resulted in a sum of 300 marks being raised."¹ It was about this time that these few men founded the National Socialist German Workers' party² in Munich.

The many political murders which took place in Germany in the first days of the Republic, although certainly representative of the National Socialist's state of mind, cannot be laid directly at the door of the party.³ For the past twelve years it appears that there has been in Germany a group of ex-officers which has been active in all extreme nationalist action. At present this group seems to have joined the National Socialists.⁴ In the past their trail may be followed through the *Kapp Putsch* in 1920, the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau and the murders by the so-called Black *Reichswehr*.

1. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich, Verlag Franz Eher, Volksgesellschaft, 1930), p. 388, et seq.

2. *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*.

3. Cf. S. B. Fay, "The Teutonic Countries," *New York Times Current History Magazine*, November 1930, p. 291 et seq.

4. Cf. Carl von Ossietzky, "Die Blutlinie," *Die Weltbühne*, October 21, 1930, p. 603 et seq.

HITLER'S POSITION IN THE PARTY

The National Socialist party and Adolf Hitler, however, first came into the lime-light in 1923. By that time Hitler, through his gift for oratory, seems to have attracted several thousand henchmen as well as the attention of General Ludendorff and the latter's nationalist followers. As early as January 1923, Hitler had come into conflict with the Bavarian government.⁵ The crisis caused by the occupation of the Ruhr and the attendant growth of ultra-nationalist sentiment in Germany seemed to Hitler to offer the psychological moment for his *Putsch*. On November 9, 1923 the combined forces of Ludendorff and Hitler attempted a coup d'état in Munich under Hitler's leadership, but it missed fire entirely. The attempt has gone down in history as the *Beer-Hall Putsch*.

As a result of this attempted action, Hitler was arrested and on April 1, 1924 was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for treason. He was released, however, at the end of 1924 and at once renewed his political activity. In February 1925 he re-founded the National Socialist party. During Hitler's imprisonment, his followers had, against his will, joined forces with another extremist group, the German People's Freedom party (*Deutsch-Völkische Freiheitspartei*). Nevertheless, after his release Hitler assumed the leadership of the combined groups.⁶ It should be noted that during Hitler's imprisonment the general election of May 7, 1924 was held, in which this extremist group managed to elect thirty-two members of the Reichstag.

ADDRESSES BY HITLER BANNED IN MANY STATES

At the time that Hitler re-founded his National Socialist party, all the German states, with the exception of Mecklenburg and Thuringia, banned him from making speeches. In Prussia the ban applied only to public meetings; in Bavaria he was forbidden, as well, to address meetings of his own followers. The interdiction was based

partly on the fact that Hitler was not a German citizen, partly on the ground that he was a danger to the security of the State, and partly to prevent riots occurring at National Socialist meetings. In 1927, however, the ban was removed in all states except Prussia.⁷

That such strenuous measures were applied against an individual is a commentary on Hitler's ability as a speaker. His power appears to lie not so much in what he says as in how he says it. People who have attended his meetings report that his audiences are swept off their feet and electrified by his oratory; it is only after the more thoughtful and intelligent return home that they begin to wonder just what he has said. Obviously, such power may be dangerous when used to sway headstrong young people or relatively unintelligent persons who are weighed down by the difficulty of life and their inability to find work. Such power also may make more plausible a program which might ordinarily appear impossible of attainment.

HITLER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY SETS FORTH HIS IDEAS

Hitler has written a book which is an autobiographical account of the development of his ideas. He calls it *Mein Kampf* and has dedicated it to his sixteen comrades who fell in the so-called *Beer-Hall Putsch* in Munich on November 9, 1923. The first volume⁸ of this work was written while the author was in a Bavarian prison during 1924. Since the book was written after his ideas had crystallized and after the process of rationalization, to use the psychological term, was complete, it is impossible to ascertain just what youthful experiences may have been responsible for the prejudices therein expressed.

HIS BIRTH AND YOUTH

Hitler was born on April 20, 1889 in the village of Braunau in Upper Austria. His father was a minor customs official in the Austro-Hungarian service, and most of

7. *Ibid.*, p. 778.

8. There are two volumes, both of which have been combined into one for the *Volksausgabe*, which comprises 781 pages.

5. Müller-Jabusch, *Handbuch des Öffentlichen Lebens* (Koehler Verlag, Leipzig, 1929), p. 778.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 778.

Adolf's youth was spent in Linz. The elder Hitler, who had not achieved his life's ambition until the age of 50, had his heart set on his son's following in his footsteps as an official. Adolf Hitler, even before he had decided what career he wished to pursue, was strenuously opposed to his father's plans. While still very young, he discovered a talent for drawing and painting and at once decided to become an artist. The conflict between father and son appears to have marked the latter's entire childhood.

According to his autobiography, Hitler appears to have been greatly interested at school in the study of history. It was then, he says—while little more than a child—that he became a nationalist. At that time, also, he conceived his hatred for the Austro-Hungarian Empire because it was an empire of nationalities and not a national empire.⁹ As quite a young man, Hitler went to Vienna where for a time he studied architecture. He appears then to have worked in the building trades and finally to have become a draughtsman. He was asked to join the Social Democratic party but refused on the ground that he was too ignorant of Socialist aims. After listening to his fellow workers for a time, he started to argue with them and finally appears to have opposed them so hotly that he was forced to quit his job. This happened several times, and he assumes that the fact that he was not a Socialist made it almost impossible for him to obtain work. As a result, Hitler lived in great poverty for a number of years. This in all probability explains, in part at least, his intense anti-Marxian feeling as well as his anti-Semitism.¹⁰ Since many Socialist leaders were Jews, to Hitler the whole Socialist movement was, and is, a plot of the international Jews to gain control of the workers.

HIS ANTI-SEMITISM

The fundamental reasons for Hitler's anti-Semitism, which is the outstanding feature of his whole philosophy, are not clear from his autobiography. He believes that Jews are not Germans no matter how long they may have resided in Germany or in German-Austria; therefore they cannot be citizens of either country. He blames the Jews for everything which he does not like or of which he does not approve in the cultural, artistic, social, economic and political life of the nation, and he sees in everything that he dislikes or disapproves the sinister influence of what he calls the international Jewish plot to conquer the world. His feeling is based primarily on racial grounds and seems to have little or no religious motivation. His anti-Semitism forms the connecting factor and fundamental basis of his whole program.

Because of his distrust and dislike for the old Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, Hitler felt unable to fight in the Austrian army when the war broke out, although he was an Austrian citizen. He therefore requested the Bavarian government to allow him to join the Bavarian army. This permission was granted and he fought through the whole war on the western front with the Bavarian troops. He was wounded once and received the Iron Cross. Because of his enlistment in the German army, Hitler lost his Austrian citizenship. Immediately after the war he belonged to the German *Reichswehr*, but for some reason seems to have neglected to take out German citizenship. After the *Beer-Hall Putsch* in 1923 and his subsequent imprisonment, Germany refused to grant him citizenship and, as a result, this most nationalist of all nationalists is a man without a country.

THE PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS

In Germany, the programs of the various parties outline the broad philosophical bases of party dogma, rather than positions in re-

gard to specific questions or so-called "campaign issues" as understood in the United States. The National Socialist party is no exception.

The Hitler program, which was actually written by Gottfried Feder in February

9. *Nationalitätenstaat* as opposed to *Nationalstaat*. Cf. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 8 et seq.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 40, et seq.

1920, is prefaced by the following statement: "The program of the party is a program for the ages. The leaders decline to set themselves new goals after the aims set forth in the present program have been achieved."¹¹ Thus the achievement of the aims of the party as expressed in its program of Twenty-Five Points, which follows, is the be-all and the end-all of the party's efforts.

THE TWENTY-FIVE POINTS

I. The union of all Germans, by the right of self-determination, in one Great Germany.

II. Equality of the German people with all other nations and the consequent abrogation of the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.

III. Land and territory (colonies) sufficient for the feeding of our people and for settlement by our surplus population.

IV. Only a member of our own people (*Volksgenosse*) may be a citizen (*Staatsbürger*). Our own people are *only* those of German blood without reference to confession. Therefore, no Jew may be a member of our people.

V. He who is not a citizen may live in Germany only as a guest and must be governed by laws regulating foreigners.

VI. Only citizens may decide on the leaders and laws of the State. Therefore, we demand that every public office, no matter of what sort, whether in the Reich, the states or the communes, shall be filled only by citizens.

We fight against the corrupting parliamentary system which is composed only of people chosen for their party politics without reference to character or ability.

VII, VIII. We demand that the State be obliged to provide working and living possibilities for its citizens. If it is not possible to feed the entire population of the State, non-citizens must be expelled from the Reich at once.

All further immigration of non-Germans is to be stopped. We demand that all non-

Germans who have immigrated to Germany since August 2, 1914 shall be forced to leave the Reich.

IX. All citizens must have the same rights and duties.

X. It must be the first duty of every citizen to produce, either in physical or intellectual fields. The activities of individuals must not be of such character as to work against the general interest but, on the contrary, must be for the common good.

XI to XVII, XXI. *Economic and Social Policy.*

XI. Abolition of all income acquired without work or trouble; destruction of the servitude to usury (*Zinsknechtschaft*).

XII. Because of the terrible sacrifice in goods and in blood which every war demands of the people, personal enrichment through war must be branded as a crime. We demand, therefore, complete confiscation of all war profits.

XIII. We demand the nationalization of trusts.

XIV. We demand distribution of the profits of large industries.

XV. We demand a great increase in care for the aged.

XVI. We demand the building-up of a healthy middle-class and its support; we demand immediate communalization of large department stores and further, that they be rented at cheap prices to small shop-keepers; the strictest control of all shop-keepers in their sales to the Reich, the states and the communes.

XVII. We demand agrarian reform consistent with our national needs; the passing of a law to expropriate without compensation land which is to be used for common purposes; the abolition of interest on land (*Bodenzinsen*) and the abolition of all speculation in land values.

XXI. The State must care for the improvement of the health of the people by protection of mother and child, by forbidding child labor, by making laws for developing sport and gymnastic duty in order to build up the bodies of its citizens, and by

11. This statement and the Twenty-Five Points are taken from the party's official program, published in Alfred Rosenberg, *Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der N. S. D. A. P. Das Programm der Bewegung erweitert durch das Agrarprogramm* (Deutscher Volksverlag, Dr. E. Boepple, Munich, 1930).

the most generous support of all clubs which work towards building up the bodies of the youth of the nation.

XVIII, XIX, XXIII. The Common Welfare.

XVIII. We demand the most strenuous battle against those people who through their activities harm the common welfare. Criminals, usurers, profiteers, etc., must be punished with death without regard to religion or race.

XIX. We demand a German common law as a substitute for the Roman law which serves the materialistic world-order.

XXIII. We demand a legislative battle against certain political lies and their propagation in the press. In order to make possible the creation of a German press, we demand that:

1. All editors and workers on newspapers which appear in the German language must be citizens.
2. Non-German newspapers require the specific permission of the State for publication. They may not be printed in the German language.
3. Any financial participation or influence in a German newspaper by a non-German is to be forbidden by law and punished by confiscating the paper as well as by the immediate expulsion from the Reich of the non-German in question.

Newspapers which work against the common good are to be prohibited.

We demand laws against tendencies in art and literature which have a bad influence on our life as a people, and the closing of institutions which offend our people.

XX, XXIV. Cultural Policy.

XX. To make it possible for every hard-working and capable German to have a higher education and therefore the opportunity of attaining a leading position, the State has the responsibility of providing for a fundamental extension of our common educational system. The plans of instruction of all institutions of learning must correspond to the demands of practical life. An understanding of the theory of the State must be taught at the very beginning by the

schools. We demand the special education at State expense of gifted children of poor parents, without regard to their profession or position.

XXIV. We demand freedom for all religious sects in the State so far as they do not endanger the State or work against the customs and morals of the German race. The party as such represents the point of view of a positive Christianity without binding itself to any particular confession. It fights the spirit of Jewish materialism in us and outside us and is convinced that a lasting convalescence of our people can only take place from the inner conviction of "common usefulness or individual usefulness."

XXII. Military Policy.

We demand the abolition of the mercenary army and the development of a people's army.

XXV. State and Domestic Policy.

In order to carry out all of this program, we demand the creation of a strong central authority in the Reich; unqualified authority of the political central parliament over the whole Reich and its organizations in general; the creation of professional chambers [like soviets] to carry out the laws promulgated by the Reich in the different federal states.

The goal of this program is *Grossdeutschland*—Great Germany.

THE GOAL OF THE PARTY —GREAT GERMANY

The National Socialist party thus aims to be both nationalist and socialist. It is socialistic in the belief that the State itself has the obligation and the duty to oversee everything which concerns the needs of its citizens. "Furthermore, we believe," says the official commentary on the National Socialist program, "that our program cannot be carried out until the bacillus which is poisoning our blood and our soul has been exterminated: it is against the Jew who has led our people astray, and against the Jewish spirit which has poisoned the German people, that a merciless battle must be waged. And

that means at the same time a battle of all spiritually and physically productive workers against the drones and parasites. For National Socialists there are neither proletarians nor bourgeoisie as two deadly enemies; there are only Germans as comrades bound together by the same blood and fate: productive Germans."¹²

Hitler's autobiography contains further information about the aims of the National Socialists in regard to German foreign policy. He—and that means the party, under his leadership—considers that the primary object of the Reich's foreign policy is the preparation for re-securing German "freedom."¹³ To achieve this end, Germany must strengthen its position as a continental power, Hitler declares. This she can do only through alliances with Britain and Italy. France is the arch-enemy of Germany and it is primarily against her that Germany must fight. In his book Hitler en-

visages two wars with the aid of Britain and Italy; one against France and one against Russia. He neglects to state whether these wars are to be fought simultaneously or consecutively. The fact that England does not seem particularly anxious to ally itself to Germany, Hitler ascribes to the influence of "international Jews." Hitler states that in this "freest democracy [England], the Jews today dictate by the round-about method of influencing public opinion, in a fashion which is practically unlimited. There is in England, almost uninterrupted cooperation between the representatives of the British State and the pioneer workers for a Jewish world-dictatorship."¹⁴

As for Russia, Hitler contends that Germany needs territory on which its surplus population can settle; that this is available only in the East; and therefore that Germany must make war on Russia to achieve this end.¹⁵

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY

The organization of the National Socialist party is highly developed. There are three classes of membership: ordinary members who pay dues of about one mark a month; the so-called Shock Troop Brigade (*Sturm Abteilung* or S. A. men); and the Party Police.

The S. A. men have definite duties and may be paid for special work. Their principal function appears to be to protect the party meetings as well as to break up meetings of other parties. The party insures the members of the S. A. against injuries, and it is reported that at the beginning of 1929 there were some 42,000 men so insured; it is estimated that there are now some 60,000 men in the S. A. Many of these shock troops are former officers but the majority of them are youths and students. They appear clad in the party uniform—a brown shirt with the swastika in black on a red arm-band. This group is under the administration of the Party Headquarters in Munich.

The so-called Party Police are a smaller group of a few hundred picked men which

might be compared to the Russian G. P. U. They carry out any orders from their leaders and are often employed as bodyguards for them. Their uniform consists of a black shirt with a skull as a badge.

Hitler has made the most of the present dissatisfaction among German youth.¹⁶ The party has organized students' groups (*Studenten Bünde*) in the universities with the result that university elections during the past few years have shown an enormous increase in Hitler's influence. Furthermore, youngsters from 14 to 18 years of age, mostly ex-pupils of the so-called *Volkschulen*, are organized as Hitler Youth (*Hitler Jugend*), and recently Hitler has endeavored to start organizing the small school children into so-called *Schüler Bünde*. The uniforms and organized sports of these groups make a decided appeal to the children. There is also a woman's organization and it is said that Hitler has great influence with them.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 721.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 687-758 for foreign policy.

16. Cf. p. 431.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

13. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 687.

Moreover, the shock troops are charged with the formation of "cells" on the Communist model in the factories or working places of the various members. Further cells are organized covering urban districts in which the members live. To attract the working-class vote, the party has a system of Labor Exchanges; except in certain districts, however, their success with labor groups is said not to have been very great.

Hitler believes, and has so instructed his followers, that personality is more important in achieving their ends than the written word. He has therefore established a school of oratory at Herrsching near Munich for the purpose of training speakers for the numerous National Socialist meetings. Each of the thirty districts into which Hitler has divided the Reich for purposes of agitation, has six or more well-trained speakers who cover the territory.

In spite of this emphasis on speeches and meetings, the party has of course issued a great deal of printed propaganda. It owns and runs an increasing number of daily newspapers and an illustrated weekly. Besides the official party organ, there are the following: *Der Angriff*, Berlin, organ of Goebbels;¹⁷ *Der Nationale Sozialist*, Berlin, organ of the most extreme group of the party and rather sympathetic to the Communists; *Der Deutsche Staat*, Leipzig; *Der Nationalsozialist*, Weimar; *Koblenzer Nationalblatt*, Coblenz; *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, Frankfurt-am-Main. There are also other papers not so definitely affiliated with the party which support Hitlerism. The chief organ of the party is the *Völkische Beobachter*, which at present is estimated to have a circulation of some 165,000. This is said

to compare well with the circulation of some of the biggest German papers.

THE FINANCES OF THE PARTY

The agitation of the National Socialists is expensive and the question is often asked as to the source of their funds. The party is said to have spent 16,000,000 marks (\$4,000,000) during the last campaign—quite a different matter from the 300 marks raised at its first meeting in 1919.¹⁸

There are many rumors current in Germany, to the effect that much of the party revenue has come from big industrialists who feel that there is less danger to the established order from the extreme Right than from the extreme Left—the Communists. Industrialists from Bavaria, and more particularly from the Ruhr and Saxony, appear to have contributed to the campaign funds, but the influential and important Federation of German Industries has categorically refused to give them money.¹⁹ Furthermore, there have been rumors that Mussolini has been supporting the National Socialists but this has never been satisfactorily proved. Some money, it appears, came from Switzerland in 1923.

Most of the money seems to have been raised by the party itself, not only by ordinary subscriptions and by donations from wealthy members but especially by the sale of tickets to its meetings. It has been well said that Hitler and Goebbels, his first lieutenant in Berlin, have become comparable to operatic stars. People in the larger cities have been quite willing to pay the usual one-mark admission fee and often five or six marks or more for better seats. Since the meetings are always crowded and since they are held in large numbers, this has proved a lucrative source of revenue.

THE PARTY'S SUCCESS IN THE 1930 ELECTIONS

The question must at once arise as to how and why a party with a program like that of the National Socialists can have secured 6,401,210 popular votes at the last election, when in 1928 it was able to poll only 809,771. Who voted for the Hitlerites and why?

It had been expected that the Young

Plan and the Rhineland evacuation would strengthen the moderate parties in the Reich who had achieved these concessions. Just the contrary took place. The evacuation of the Rhineland by foreign troops some five years earlier than provided in the peace

18. Cf. p. 422.

19. Cf. Richard Lewinson (Morus), *Das Geld in der Politik* (Berlin, Fischer Verlag, 1930), p. 146 et seq.

17. Hitler's chief assistant.

treaty was greeted with heartfelt rejoicing by the German people, and at about the same time the Young Plan came into force. While presumably the reparation burden of Germany was somewhat lightened, these developments synchronized unfortunately with the world economic depression, and with a budget crisis in Germany. The fall in the world price level largely nullified the advantages which the Reich might have gained from the Young Plan. Almost three million unemployed workers²⁰ in the Reich presented a financial, political and social problem of such magnitude that the good psychological effects of the early evacuation of the Rhineland were also nullified.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GERMANY—1930

The German Empire was in existence from 1871 until the Revolution in November 1918. During these forty-seven years the German people lived under a paternalistic social and political system. With the Revolution and the coming into force of the Weimar Constitution, Germany suddenly became a Republic whose sovereignty rested in the people. In the first twelve years of the existence of the new Republic, the German people have been faced with problems of extraordinary difficulty and importance—problems which they have been called upon to solve without the background and education which have been inherent in the slower and more gradual development of the older parliamentary democracies.

After the hardships of the war, came the Revolution. The blockade further weakened a people already in a state of semi-starvation. Hardly had the effects of these hard years begun to wear off, when the inflation came—wiping out the savings of the middle classes, reducing the real wages and therefore the standard of living of the working

classes²¹ and throwing the Reich almost into chaos. The occupation of the Ruhr added to the bitterness of the people. Then came the Dawes Plan, but in 1925, after the stabilization of the currency and a slow improvement in economic conditions, there was a severe crisis with attendant unemployment of millions of people. After recovery from this depression the necessary rationalization of industry resulted in throwing many thousands out of work. Finally, after renewed difficulties, aggravated by the uncertainty produced by the protracted negotiations for a revision of the reparation settlement, the present world depression set in. The September 1930 German elections must be viewed in relation to this background.

The German party system, like the party system in all continental countries, has not always succeeded in coping with the problems facing the Reich. Germany has no monopoly on the game of playing politics, but the fact remains that many people in the Reich have become disgusted with the spectacle of a Reichstag deadlocked and unable to legislate without ever-renewed parliamentary crises. The result is that many Germans have lost patience with the parliamentary system itself, as well as with the ability of the party leaders and of the old parties to accomplish anything constructive in alleviating the present distress.

THE SITUATION RIPE FOR HITLER'S PROPAGANDA

Thus the Hitler agitation has fallen on fertile ground, and the methods employed by the National Socialists have been enormously successful in harvesting a large crop of votes. The written program of the National Socialist party plays a lesser part in its agitation than the speeches at the party's thousands of meetings. During the fortnight before the September elections, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official organ of the party, listed some 3,300 meetings.²² Moreover, many of these meetings are said to have been in small out-of-the-way villages where only a few election meetings had been held before. Hitler's stalwarts, clad in their

20. At the time of the September elections there were 2,750,000 unemployed in the Reich. Cf. M. S. Wertheimer, "The Significance of the German Elections," *F. P. A. Information Service*, Vol. VI, No. 13, September 3, 1930. By December 15, 1930, according to official figures, there were some 3,977,000 unemployed in Germany. (Cf. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Reichsausgabe*, December 24, 1930.) By December 31, 1930, according to an Associated Press dispatch, this figure had risen to 4,357,000. (Cf. *New York Times*, January 9, 1931.)

21. J. W. Angell, *The Recovery of Germany* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1929), p. 254 et seq.

22. *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 1-13, 1930, inclusive.

brown uniforms, toured the country in trucks appealing to the dramatic sense of the people. In many villages these meetings, well advertised beforehand, seem to have been to the inhabitants much like a traveling circus.

Hitler, it is said, requires his followers to appeal to the hearts of their audiences, rather than to their heads. They must denounce everything connected with the present order of things in the Reich and promise an entirely new order—the Third Reich. The National Socialist orators are well-trained, well-disciplined and enthusiastic. The shock troop men of the party are posted here and there among the crowd at every meeting and are instructed to applaud or to interrupt at certain points, at a certain phrase, and huge mass meetings are thus aroused to frenzied enthusiasm almost at will. This partakes of the technique of the camp-meeting revivalist and the Ku Klux Klan.²³ The National Socialist leaders, in particular Hitler, appear to their audiences as romantic deliverers, as evangelists of the new order.

In their speeches, these leaders promise to help everyone; they temper their remarks to suit their audiences. It is said that when

talking to small white-collar bourgeoisie, they speak of profit-sharing schemes; to small shopkeepers, they stress their promise that the big department stores will be taken over by the State and divided among the small retailers; to the farmers, weighed down by mortgages, they talk of the tyranny of usury; to university students, faced by the glut in the professional labor market, the Nazis²⁴ leaders say that the present situation is due to the rottenness of the present system in which offices are available only through parliamentary favoritism and pull; to minor industrialists, they expound the danger of Bolshevism; to the workers, they apparently give the usual Socialist arguments; and so on.

But always, no matter what the audience, the Hitlerites emphasize the dishonoring of Germany by the peace treaties, the moral stigma of the war-guilt clauses and the fact that the German people are “enslaved” for generations to come by the crushing burden of reparation payments: the guilt for imposing these moral and financial obloquies on the German people rests on the Jews. The Jews are responsible, too, for Bolshevism and for the occupation of the Rhineland, especially for the black troops in the occupying army.

HITLER'S MANIFESTO—SEPTEMBER, 1930

On September 10, 1930 Hitler issued an election manifesto which even more than the official published program of the party gives the basis on which he appealed to the voters. In it he says:²⁵

“With lies the Revolution was inspired.

“With lies the Armistice was brought about.

“With lies the necessity of surrendering our navy was foisted upon us.

“With lies our people were induced to sign the dictates of London and Paris.

“With lies Germany was made to sign the so-called peace treaty of Versailles.

“With lies our people were led into accepting the Dawes Plan.

“Lies had to prepare the way for the signature of Locarno.

“AND LIES AND YET MORE LIES HAVE NOW GIVEN US THE YOUNG PLAN. . . .

“People, judge fairly!

“Who has spoken the truth and who has not? . . .

“If we, in our warnings to you have spoken the truth, then people, be just and SEND THE BETRAYERS OF YOUR FUTURE TO THE DEVIL.

“Do not allow yourselves once again to be appeased by the phrase ‘We have sacrificed ourselves for an illusion.’ Indeed, for

23. Cf. Sidney B. Fay, “The Teutonic Countries,” *New York Times Current History Magazine*, November 1930, p. 294.

24. The expression *Nazis* is a contraction of National Socialist used largely in the press.

25. *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 10, 1930.

twelve years, the gentlemen of the parties which are our enemies have only known 'illusions.'

"At the Armistice, the most ghastly oppression of all times, these gentlemen bewailed the fact that they had sacrificed themselves for the illusion of Wilson's Fourteen Points. And then came one illusion after another. Spa and Brussels and Versailles and Geneva and Paris and London and Locarno and the League of Nations and the Dawes Plan and finally the Young Plan. And all those were only illusions.

"But under the curse of these illusions, Germany has lost her freedom, she has lost her moral prestige, and having no longer any political honor, she has now sacrificed her economic substance. Germany has paid billions for these illusions and the debt has not grown smaller. Germany has dishonored herself for these illusions and the hatred of our enemies has increased, while their greed still knows no bounds."

HITLER'S SUPPORTERS

It is of course difficult to state exactly who are the bulk of Hitler's supporters, but it appears that the majority of them are small traders, disgruntled farmers and above all the younger generation of voters. It has been estimated that approximately a quarter of the total number of German voters have attained their majority since the end of the war.²⁶ Hot-headed and impulsive, as youth tends to be the world over, these young people have all their lives experienced hardships. First the war, with its attendant lack of proper food, lax discipline at school and at home, and a general over-wrought emotional state; then the uncertainty of the Revolution and hunger intensified by the blockade. Then, at the time when they should have been learning the value of money, came the inflation. The result is that many of these young people are uncomplicated in their thinking and totally lacking in idealism. The political wrangling of the older parties has disillusioned many of them. Those who have any international sentiments have become Communists; the large majority, attracted too

by the pomp and circumstance with which the Hitler movement has surrounded itself, have become National Socialists. Lacking in political judgment, these youngsters believe that the way to attain a goal is to shoot straight for it, regardless of obstacles; the realities of politics, international or national, mean nothing to them. Furthermore, since they had nothing to do with the war, they feel intensely that there is no reason why they themselves and their children and grandchildren after them should pay for it. They have lost faith completely in their elders who, they consider, have made a failure of life; now it is their turn to put the world right, and Hitler is their prophet.

IMPORTANCE OF "NON-VOTERS" IN HITLER'S MOVEMENT

Besides these flaming youths, the Hitler ranks have been swelled by voters from the small bourgeoisie. Many small white-collar people whose businesses are completely disrupted by the depression, but who feel that it would degrade them to vote for the Social Democrats, have turned National Socialist. The same applies to many farmers and agricultural workers since German agriculture is in a bad way. Finally, many people belonging to what is known in Germany as the "non-Voters' party"—people who have never voted before—this time went to the polls and cast their votes for Hitler and his Third Reich as the way out of their present difficulties. Their feeling is that the older parties have not been able to stem the rising tide of unemployment; and that perhaps Hitler, an unknown quantity but one who promises everything that makes life worth while, can save Germany from ruin.

An analysis of comparative election returns in the province of Hessen, one statistician states, shows that the National Socialists owe their great gains primarily to these former non-voters. It was on them that the National Socialist agitation had the greatest effect. Moreover, it appears from this same study that the farmers and peasants were much more susceptible to the Hitlerites than were the workers; the Social Democratic losses seem to have been about equal to the Communist gains. The Catholic Center

26. In Germany the minimum voting age is 20.

party apparently has withstood the inroads of the National Socialists better than any other party. In predominantly Catholic districts and among the workers, the Hitlerites have won little or no ground.²⁷

The various occupations of the 107 National Socialist Reichstag deputies are as follows:²⁸

Farmers	14
Farm-workers	2
Bakers	1
Laborers	17
Free Professions ²⁹	7
Business men	19
Primary School-teachers	7
Higher School-teachers	8
Writers	6
Ex-Army officers	6
Officials ³⁰	12
Lawyers	8
Total	107

THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS IN THE REICHSTAG

The National Socialists are at present the second strongest party in the Reichstag. Furthermore, the German National People's party, under the leadership of Dr. Alfred Hugenberg, although greatly reduced in membership, can be counted upon to cooperate with the Hitlerites in opposing the present government. The Communists, too, have made large gains. In all, any moderate government in the Reich must reckon with a combined opposition of 224 extremists out of

a total Reichstag membership of 576.³¹ The strongest party in the Reichstag, the Social Democrats, is not represented in the Cabinet. Nevertheless, on their direct support or benevolent neutrality, depends the fate of the Brüning government.

The complete returns of the general elections of September 14, 1930, as compared with those of 1928, are shown in the following table:

COMPARATIVE ELECTION RETURNS—1928 AND 1930

PARTIES (Arranged according to size after 1930 elections)	POPULAR VOTES		NUMBER OF SEATS	
	1928*	1930†	1928*	1930†
1. Social Democratic (<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland</i>)	9,150,500	8,572,016	153	143
2. National Socialist (<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i>)	809,900	6,401,210	12	107
3. Communist	3,262,900	4,587,708	54	76
4. Catholic Center (<i>Zentrum</i>)	3,710,800	4,128,929	62	68
5. National People's (<i>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</i>)	4,380,200	2,458,497	73	41
6. People's (<i>Deutsche Volkspartei</i>)	2,678,500	1,657,149	45	30
7. Economic (<i>Reichspartei des Deutschen Mittelstandes</i> [<i>Wirtschaftspartei</i>])	1,395,700	1,360,585	23	23
8. State (<i>Staatspartei</i> , former Democratic party)	1,504,700	1,322,608	25	20
9. Bavarian People's (<i>Bayerische Volkspartei</i>)	945,300	1,058,556	16	19
10. Christian National Peasant's (<i>Christlich nationale Bauern und Landvolkspartei</i>)	581,500	1,104,000	10	18
11. Christian Socialist People's (<i>Christlichsoziale Volksdienst</i>)	63,110**	867,000	14
12. German Peasant's (<i>Deutsche Bauernpartei</i>)	481,000	339,000	8	6
13. People's Conservative (<i>Volkskonservative partei</i>)	313,000	5
14. Agrarian League (<i>Landbund</i>)	199,500	193,000	3	3
15. German Hannoverian (<i>Deutsch-Hannoverische</i>)	195,400	144,000	3	3
16. Other parties	1,442,900	4
Total			491	576

*1928 figures from *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Reimar Hobbing Verlag, Berlin, 1929).

†1930 figures from *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1930, Vol. 18, p. 768.

**From *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Reichsausgabe*, September 16, 1930.

EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS IN GERMANY—1924 AND 1930

In appraising the results of any German election, the total number of Reichstag deputies elected must always be taken into account. Viewed from this angle, the last elections are particularly interesting for they show that the percentage of seats acquired by the two parties of the extreme Right, the National Socialist and the German National People's parties, is slightly less than the combined percentage which these two parties received at the general election in May 1924, held in the midst of the Ruhr occupation and the inflation difficulties. The

election of May 1924 resulted in the most pronounced swing to the Right of any German election under the Republic; in spite of the great gains of the Hitlerites in September 1930, the May 1924 election, in a sense, still holds the record. The following table shows the development of sentiment in Germany on the extreme Right and the extreme Left as expressed in the number of Reichstag members elected by the National Socialist and German National People's parties and the Communist party at the last four Reichstag elections.

THE EXTREMIST PARTIES IN THE LAST FOUR REICHSTAGS

	May 1924	December 1924	May 1928	September 1930
Total Reichstag Deputies	472	493	491	576
National Socialists	32	15	12	107
National People's party	95	110	78	41
Communists	62	45	54	76
Nationalist per cent of total	26.9	25.35	18.1	25.56
Communist per cent of total	13.13	9.13	10.99	13.19
Total per cent of Extremists	40.03	34.48	29.09	38.75

It should be noted, however, that the Right in 1924 was more moderate than it is today. Although conservative in the extreme and nationalist, the National People's party in 1924 was still reckoned as a "respectable" party. Its members represented agrarian and landholding classes, particularly of Prussia, ex-army officers and officials of the old régime, and industrialists and middle-class elements with monarchist sentiments. In the last few years, under the leadership of Dr. Alfred Hugenberg, the party has become more and more intransigent. Since the more moderate members left its ranks during 1930 and formed a new group, the People's Conservative party, Hugenberg's rump party, reduced to forty-one members,

has been cooperating more and more with the Hitlerites who now form the largest group on the Right.²⁷

In a sense, therefore, the nationalist protest expressed in September 1930 is stronger and more violent than that recorded in May 1924; and that it has been made twelve years after the Armistice only serves to underline this fact. It is a protest not only against the severe economic difficulties facing the German people at present, but also against all that they have suffered spiritually and physically during the past decade.

The six and a half million National Socialist votes cannot be regarded as entirely an expression of approval for the party's

members but for a so-called party list—in other words for the party itself—and there is a complicated system of local and Reich lists, whereby practically no votes are wasted and each party elects almost exactly the number of deputies which its total vote divided by 60,000 amounts to. The result is that the total number of Reichstag deputies varies according to the total number of votes polled in an election. After the general election held in May 1928, there were 491 members of the Reichstag; now, since the election of September 14, 1930, there are 576 Reichstag deputies, an increase of 85. In 1930 there were approximately 42.8 million qualified voters as compared with 41.2 million in 1928; 82.3 per cent of the qualified voters went to the polls in September 1930 and, reinforced by 1.5 million new voters, in all more than 4 million more persons, an increase of 7.8 per cent, voted in the 1930 elections than in those of 1928. Cf. *Die Tat*, October 1930, p. 488.

32. Opposition to the present government and denunciation of the peace treaties form the basis of this alliance; but it is unlikely that Hugenberg would or could agree to the economic and social aspects of the National Socialist program.

27. *Frankfurter Zeitung, Reichsausgabe*, December 2 and 3, 1930.

28. *Völkischer Beobachter*, October 1, 1930.

29. These seven comprise: 2 engineers, 2 economists, 1 architect, 1 chemist and 1 apothecary.

30. These comprise petty administrative officials in various government services.

31. The minority government of Dr. Brüning (Catholic Center party) is composed of representatives of the People's party, the Catholic Center party, the Bavarian People's party, the State party and the People's Conservative party. Until late November the Economic party also supported the government.

The German Reichstag is elected by a system of proportional representation, under which one deputy is chosen for each 60,000 votes cast. The people vote not for individual party

program; one commentator states: "The National Socialists have neither a political nor an economic program that can be taken seriously."³³ Nevertheless, the two slogans of the party—*Deutschland Erwache* (Germany Awaken) and *Arbeit und Brot* (Work and Bread)—express a spiritual and a physical craving of the German people resulting from the hardships of the last ten years. How the end is to be achieved in the realm of actuality has not concerned the six and a half million

who voted for the National Socialists; it is the goal itself which is important; Germany must awaken and reassert itself as a great power; the German people must have work and bread.

The future alone will show whether the National Socialist movement is an ephemeral development which, with the mitigation of the economic crisis, will disappear almost as quickly as it arose.

33. Adolf Grabowsky, "Deutschland nach den Wahlen," *Zeitschrift für Politik*, October, November, 1930, p. 443.